

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 158720
ORIGIN SAB-02

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DRAFTED BY S/AB:AMB. POPPER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: US, PN, SNEV, TOCY, EWWT

SUBJECT: PANAMA: SEA LEVEL CANAL STUDY

REF: STATE 156226

1. AT OAS RECEPTION JUNE 21 GOP FOREIGN MINISTER GONZALEZ-REVILLA AND EMBASSY CHARGE BILONIK CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR POPPER THAT PANAMA FOUND ACCEPTABLE THE MIXED COMMISSION FORMULA CONTAINED IN SENATOR GRAVEL'S PROPOSAL FOR A SEA LEVEL CANAL STUDY.

2. THEY DO NOT, HOWEVER, REGARD IT AS A JOINT COMMISSION TO UNDERTAKE THE JOINT STUDY PRESCRIBED IN ARTICLE TWELVE OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY. PANAMA WILL RESERVE THE RIGHT, THEY SAID, TO ORGANIZE ITS OWN COMMISSION TO STUDY A SEA LEVEL CANAL IN PANAMA; IN SUCH A COMMISSION THE ROLES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD BE REVERSED, WITH PROFFERED AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN A PANAMANIAN GROUP. THE JOINT STUDY WOULD BE A PRODUCT OF THE WORK OF THE TWO COMMISSIONS.

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3. COMMENT: WE CANNOT GUESS WHETHER PANAMA WOULD ACTUALLY PROCEED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS ELABORATE RATIONALIZATION. IT EXPLAINS, HOWEVER, HOW PANAMA CAN

RECONCILE THE GRAVEL FORMULA WITH ITS NORMAL INSISTENCE ON SOVEREIGN EQUALITY. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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